

## California Electric and Magnetic Fields Program

# NEWSLETTER

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES UPDATE

January 2000

### BIOELECTROMAGNETICS SOCIETY ABSTRACTS SUBMITTED

Researchers at the California EMF Program recently submitted four abstracts to the Bioelectromagnetics Society (BEMS) for papers and posters to be presented at the twenty-second annual BEMS conference. This year's conference will be held June 9-16, 2000, at the Technical College in Munich, Germany. The following abstracts were submitted:

- "Personal Magnetic Field Exposures Among Teachers," by Geraldine Lee, et al.
- "Prevalence of Self Reported Electrical Hypersensitivity and Associated Factors in California," by Patrick Levallois, et al.
- "Can One Estimate the Limits of the Possible Childhood Leukemia Risk Attributable to ELF Magnetic Field Exposure?" Vincent Del Pizzo, et al.
- "Informing California Policies on the Power Grid and In Schools Through Decision Analysis," by Raymond Neutra, et al.

Copies of the abstracts will be distributed in a future program mailing, when they have been accepted by the conference.

### 1999 PROGRAM REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE CPUC

In late December, the California EMF Program submitted its 1999 progress report to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). This report contained information on the program's progress between July 1996 and October 1999, and was accompanied by a letter requesting a no-cost extension of the program through December 2001. Copies of the report were distributed to our Core stakeholders.

### FINANCIAL UPDATES TO SAC CORE

Core SAC members are receiving a quarterly budget and timeline update as an insert in this January 2000 newsletter. This insert includes updated budget information through October 1999, and Gantt charts of the current project timelines.

### EMF PARTICIPATION IN THE CASH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Coalition for Adequate School Housing (CASH) is holding its annual conference from February 21-24, 2000, in Sacramento. The California EMF Program has participated in past CASH conferences, both by leading workshops and by sending representatives to the conference's State Resource Room to share information about the program with conference participants. This year, staff will lead a round table discussion titled "Policy Options for Addressing Magnetic Field Exposure in Schools." The program will once again be represented in the conference's State Resource Room. For more information about this conference, contact the Coalition for Adequate School Housing at (916) 448-8577.

### *Upcoming Meetings and Workshops*

Wednesday, February 16, 2000

School Policy Analysis Project Introductory Workshop

Thursday, February 17, 2000

Scientific Advisory Panel Meeting: Vote on the final Risk Evaluation Guidelines

Friday, February 18, 2000

Stakeholders Advisory Consultants Meeting: Discussion of Contractor Response to comments on Power Grid Policy Analysis Project

### FEBRUARY/MARCH NEWSLETTERS COMBINED:

Due to the many meetings taking place next month, a combined newsletter for February and March will be distributed in mid March. Program staff will provide updates on the Program's progress at the SAC meeting in February.

## CDHS ELECTRIC BLANKET STUDY

The California Department of Health Services electric blanket and clinically recognized spontaneous abortion study conducted by Geraldine M. Lee, Raymond R. Neutra, Lilia Hristova, Michael Yost, and Robert A. Hiatt will be published in the July issue of *Epidemiology*. This study was not conducted or funded by the California EMF Program, but several Program staff members were involved in the study, including lead author Geraldine Lee. Below is the study's abstract:

The authors conducted a prospective cohort study to evaluate the relation of spontaneous abortion and electric bed heater use during the first trimester of pregnancy. Compared with non-users, rates of spontaneous abortion were lower for women who used electric bed heaters. The adjusted odds ratio and 95% confidence interval for the two major devices used, electric blankets (n=524) and water beds (n=796), were respectively: 0.8 (0.5-1.1) and 0.9 (0.7-1.2). An increase of risk with increasing intensity (setting-duration) of use was not observed. Electric blanket users at low settings for most of the night (n=171) had lower risks of spontaneous abortion than non-users (adjusted odds ratio=0.5, 95% confidence interval=0.3-1.0). Twenty women who used electric blankets at a high setting for one hour or less had an adjusted odds ratio of 3.0 (95% confidence interval=1.1-8.3), but the study found no spontaneous abortions among the few (n=13) women who used a high setting for two or more hours. The authors found that exposure rankings of the magnetic field time-weighted average and a rate of change metric did not correspond monotonically to the pattern of spontaneous abortion risks and that electric blankets contribute less to overnight time-weighted average magnetic fields than has been thought.

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## RESEARCH UNIT PROGRESS

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**Risk Evaluation Guidelines:** The revised Risk Evaluation Guidelines (REG), together with the list of comments and the staff's responses, have been cleared for distribution by the DHS and sent to the Science Advisory Panel (SAP) for their final review. The SAP will vote to accept or reject this final document at their meeting on February 17, 2000. Members of the public may attend this meeting as observers. The final REG can be downloaded from the program's Web site at <http://www.dnai.com/~emf/research.html>, or can be ordered for the cost of copying from City Copy Center (telephone (510) 763-0193).

**School Policy Analysis:** Keith Florig continues to work on the narrative discussion of the analysis. Staff have viewed parts of the draft as they became available and provided feedback as

appropriate and possible. Keith will be available at an introductory workshop on Wednesday, February 16, 2000, to present the report and model and answer questions. The full draft will be available by that date.

**Power Grid/Land Use Policy Analysis:** Detlof von Winterfeldt has prepared his responses to the stakeholders' comments on the draft final report and model. His responses outline the changes that will be made and explain his reasons not to make some requested changes when he found them to be unwarranted or impractical. This document will be distributed to our stakeholders by the end of January, and will be discussed at our next SAC meeting on February 18, 2000.

**Epidemiology Workshop:** Staff are continuing to edit the discussions from the January 1999 workshop. Seven of the twelve articles and their accompanying discussions have already been sent to the journal *Bioelectromagnetics*, which will publish the proceedings in a special issue. All articles are expected to be mailed to *Bioelectromagnetics* by the end of next month.

**Prospective Miscarriage Study:** The Kaiser team has completed its preliminary analysis and is working on a confidential interim report for the peer reviewers. This intermediate step is necessary to allow the peer reviewers to determine whether these interim results are of sufficient quality to be considered for the Program's Risk Evaluation.

**School Exposure Assessment Survey:** Luciano Zaffanella is preparing his final report and his responses to the peer review comments.

**Occupational Exposure Study:** All data collected in the validation of the job task survey have been entered and checked, and the statistical analysis is almost complete. Work on the final report is in progress. Program staff expect to receive the draft early next month.

**Policy Integration:** The outline of this project has been reviewed by the CPUC. Further work on this project will be done after the Risk Evaluation and the policy analyses are substantially completed.

**EMF Program Library:** Webb Sprague, with input from the rest of the staff, continues to monitor the literature to keep the Program's EMF library up to date.

**Risk Evaluation:** Walter Rogers and Claire Sherman submitted drafts of their final reports on, respectively, EMF animal studies and childhood cancer epidemiology. Paul Gailey continues to work on his literature review of the biophysical evidence. His work has been delayed due to his move from Oak Ridge to the

University of Ohio. DHS staff have begun working on the "pro and con" arguments for each endpoint, as described in the final version of the Risk Evaluation Guidelines.

## EDUCATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE UNIT UPDATES

### VIDEO ON CORRECTING IMPROPER WIRING IN SCHOOLS

The California EMF Program's School Exposure Assessment Survey showed that many of the school classrooms surveyed have elevated magnetic fields from improper wiring. In some cases, this improper wiring may violate electrical codes and could potentially result in a fire hazard. The Program, in cooperation with Southern California Edison, sponsored production of a video in which Karl Riley, an electrician with experience in dealing with such problems, explains the wiring problems and demonstrates ways to fix them. The video is now complete, and the Education Unit is helping the California Department of Education to develop strategies for distributing this video and related information to California's approximately 1000 school districts. With the help of Southern California Edison and others, we hope the Department of Education will be able to provide a copy of the video to each school district in the state, and make additional copies available to others interested in this issue. We greatly appreciate Southern California Edison's work in making this possible.

### OUTREACH EFFORTS TO THE CALIFORNIA PTA

Because the School Policy Analysis Project draft materials will soon be available to our stakeholders and the public, we are increasing our outreach to school-related organizations that may have an interest in that project's results. As a part of this effort, we have submitted an article describing our school-related work to a California State PTA publication distributed to all 4000 PTA chapters in the state. We are also planning more articles and presentations for PTA-related groups, including the California PTA Health Commission, to inform them of our work.

#### *Milestones Reached* *12/16/1999-1/15/2000*

- ✱ Risk Evaluation Guidelines approved by DHS and distributed to SAP and SAC
- ✱ CPUC Report approved by DHS and submitted to the CPUC
- ✱ SAP meeting to vote on the Risk Evaluation Guidelines set for February 17, 2000

and the California Department of Health Services

### WEB SITE

The Education Unit continues to monitor the content and use of the Program's Web site, and to develop new content as needed. Education Unit staff have spent time this month updating the information on the Program's newly restructured Web site. This unit works with the program's research associate, Webb Sprague, to ensure that the information on the site is current and accurate. The Education Unit takes the lead in writing new and updated material for the site, while Webb has taken over responsibility for posting the changes to the site since the departure of the program's secretary, Cherry Elliott.

### OTHER RECENT ACTIVITIES

**Public Questions:** Because of the holidays, we received fewer questions from members of the public than usual during late December and early January. Still, staff responded to the many questions and e-mails that we received during that time.

**Meeting Planning:** The Education Unit has been involved in planning the meetings and workshop that are scheduled for February 2000, and has started developing agendas for these meetings.

**CASH conference:** This unit is preparing for the logistics and content of the round table discussion the Program will lead at the CASH conference in late February.

**Support of the Research Unit:** As always, the Education Unit devotes a great deal of time to supporting the research program and helping prepare research products, such as the final Risk Evaluation Guidelines, for distribution to stakeholders and the public.

### STAFF CHANGES

#### *Farewell to Maria Giron*

Maria Giron, part-time administrative assistant to the California EMF Program for almost two years, has left the program to prepare for the birth of her second child in February. Maria's primary responsibilities were to maintain internal financial records and to coordinate the logistics of SAC and SAP meetings and phone conferences. We will miss Maria's many contributions to the program and wish her well with the new addition to her family. Due to the late stage in the program's progress, we will not be hiring a replacement administrative assistant.

#### *Welcome to Myra Alcaide*

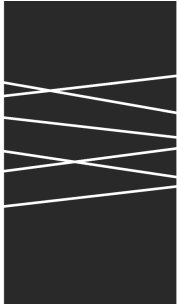
Myra Alcaide has joined the California EMF Program staff as our new part-time secretary/administrative assistant to replace Cherry Elliott. Myra grew up locally in San Francisco, and received her Bachelor of Arts in Broadcast Communication Arts from San Francisco State University. She is currently returning to school part time to help her pursue a career in Event Production and Planning. She brings to the program her extensive experience as an administrative assistant, and we are pleased to welcome her to our staff.

## EMF PROGRAM STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

	(510)			(510)	
Raymond Neutra	622-4905	rneutra@dhs.ca.gov	Jessica Hecht	622-4430	jhecht@dhs.ca.gov
Alvin Leonard	622-4432	alvinleonard@yahoo.com	Jack Collins	622-4431	emfadmin@dnai.com
Vincent Del Pizzo	622-4418	delpizzo@yahoo.com	Myra Alcaide	622-4433	MAlcaid1@dhs.ca.gov
Geraldine Lee	622-5091	gerrilee17@yahoo.com	Webb Sprague	622-4500	emf@dnai.com

main phone (510) 622-4500, fax (510) 622-4505

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### California Electric and Magnetic Fields Program

A project of the California Department of Health Services and the Public Health Institute  
Elihu Harris State Office Building  
1515 Clay St., 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612